

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of determining whether an encoded signal has been encoded with a particular type of encoder, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at least a part of said encoded signal;
decoding the received signal using a decoder which performs the reverse operation of said particular type of encoder;
deriving a fingerprint from the decoded signal;
comparing said fingerprint with fingerprints stored in a database; and
concluding that the encoded signal has been encoded with said particular type of encoder if the derived fingerprint corresponds to one of the fingerprints stored in the database.

2. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said steps are performed by a server which receives the encoded signal from a client through a network.

3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 2, further comprising the step of:

awarding the client if the server concluded that the received and decoded signal had been encoded with said particular type of encoder.

4. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 3, wherein said step of awarding comprises:

retrieving from the database metadata associated with the signal, and
transmitting said metadata to the client.

5-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously Presented) A system, comprising a computer readable medium, such as a memory, which stores a set of instructions and a processor which

executes the set of instructions, the set of instructions being operable to control the processor to:

- receive at least a part of said encoded signal;
- decode the received signal using a decoder which performs a reverse operation of said particular type of encoder;
- derive a fingerprint from the decoded signal;
- compare said fingerprint with fingerprints stored in a database; and
- determine whether the encoded signal has been encoded with said particular type of encoder by determining whether the derived fingerprint corresponds to one of the fingerprints stored in the database.

9. (Previously Presented) A server configured to receive from a client via a network encoded files encoded by the client using a selected one of plurality of encoding operations, the server comprising:

- a decoder configured to perform a decoding operation to decode the encoded files received from the client to generate a decoded file;

- a fingerprint extraction unit configured to extract a fingerprint from the decoded file;

- a database configured to store one or more fingerprints identifying fingerprints indicative of one or more of the encoding operations; and

- a processor configured to compare the extracted fingerprint from the decoded file with the one or more fingerprints stored in the database and determine whether the extracted fingerprint corresponds to a selected one of the encoding operations.

10. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 9, wherein in response to the server concluding that the received encoded files have been encoded using the selected encoding operation, the processor communicates an award to the client.

11. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 10, wherein the award includes metadata associated with the encoded file, the metadata being transmitted to the client.

12. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 9, wherein in response to the server concluding that the extracted fingerprint was not found in the database, the processor transmits a message to the client.

13. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 9, wherein in response to the extracted fingerprint not being stored in the database, the processor sends a request to the client to resend the encoded file.

14. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 9, wherein the fingerprint is a bit pattern associated with the encoded files.

15. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 9, further including:

a plurality of client encoders; and

a network which connects the client encoders and the server.

16. (Previously Presented) The server as claimed in claim 9, wherein the decoded file is an audio signal and the fingerprint is a bit pattern indicative of features of the audio signal.